

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Minutes of Regular Meeting March 12, 2019 6:00 p.m.

Municipal Building II, Conference Room 100 90 E. Civic Center Drive, Gilbert, Arizona 85296

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Ferron, Vice Chair Barbara Guy Gilbert Honeycutt Jennifer Jones Edward Madrid Matthew Roberts

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Les Presmyk, Chair Mark LaPorte Christopher Wharton

STAFF PRESENT:

Robert Carmona, Parks and Recreation Director Rocky Brown, Parks and Recreation Business Manager Marshall MacFarlane, Parks and Facilities Manager Jennifer Lauria, Program Coordinator

COUNCIL LIAISON PRESENT:

Vice Mayor Eddie Cook

GUESTS:

Doralise Liddell, Gilbert Resident Cecilia Chin, Gilbert Sun News Chris Belanger, MYAC

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

- **1. CALL TO ORDER:** Vice Chair Ferron called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.
- 2. ROLL CALL: Rocky Brown called the roll and it was determined that a quorum was present.
- **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
- **4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITIZENS PRESENT:** Members of the public may comment on matters within the jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Board, but not on the agenda. The Board's response is limited to responding to criticism, asking staff to review a matter commented upon, or asking that a matter be put on a future agenda. There were no communications from citizens at this time.

There was a request to speak under Agenda Item 11, Page Park Report.

CONSENT ITEMS

5. FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY AND GILBERT LIBRARIES ANNUAL REPORT:

As the Southeast Regional Library was short a manager, staff was unable to attend the meeting. The Libraries Annual Report was provided in the Agenda Packet for Board review.

Vice Chair Ferron requested a continuance on this item so that the library staff can give their presentation at a future Board meeting.

PRESENTATIONS

6. GIVING MACHINE REPORT: Rocky Brown reported on the Giving Machines that had been placed in downtown Gilbert during the Holiday season benefiting global and local charities. The LDS Church organized the Light the World project and the production and management of the Giving Machines. Aside from the

Gilbert location, other cities involved in the project included Salt Lake City, New York, Manilla and London. The local non-profit organizations included A New Leaf, St. Mary's Food Bank, Helen's Hope Chest, and the United Food Bank. The Giving Machines in Gilbert raised \$862,120 and had 34,843 attendees.

At a prior Board meeting, there were questions as to how the charities were selected and the potential for other non-profits to be involved. The group that organized the Giving Machines worked with LDS charities to select local nonprofit partners, worked with the local division of Just Serve, and cross-referenced the recommendations with the list received from Melanie Dykstra, Program Supervisor for the Town of Gilbert. The organizers are hopeful that the program will return to Gilbert in December. The group intends to evaluate all charitable partners involved and will seek opportunities for other non-profit organizations.

7. THE STRAND@GILBERT: Rocky Brown reviewed a public-private partnership with The Strand that was presented to Town Council in executive session, followed by a public session on February the 21st. This project has been in private negotiations over the last 18 months due to non-disclosure considerations with new technology. The Strand of Gilbert has proposed a public-private partnership on a 25-acre parcel of the 47 acres of high and dry land at Gilbert Regional Park.

<u>Project Overview</u>: The Strand is a state-of-the-art water sports complex featuring a cable wake park. aqua park, surf lagoon, clubhouse, restaurant, sand beach, cabanas, and swimming areas, and is expected to open in 2020. The project has an estimated construction investment of \$35 million and revenues are estimated between \$25-36 million annually. The Strand is designed to be more of a skills-based water park with options for all ages. The surf lagoon is designed to generate and control large waves up to 10 feet high and the complex will be able to accommodate local and national tournaments for wakeboarding and surfing.

Public Benefits:

Activate 25 acres with a water recreation amenity No cost to the Town 400 Shared parking spaces Discount for Gilbert residents Intro surf classes (the first in Arizona)

Lease: 50-year lease with three 10-year renewal options.

<u>Maintenance</u>: The Strand will be responsible for maintenance of all buildings, grounds, equipment, fencing, furnishings, as well as improvements, operations, and ADA compliance.

<u>Financial Impact</u>: Land lease of \$253,191 (minimum annual guarantee) with estimated revenue share of \$450,000 to \$750,000, based on 3% of gross revenues between \$15-25 million. The hope is that the project will result in approximately \$1 million in new revenue coming into the park system.

Economic Impact: 180 new jobs and an estimated \$317 million in economic impact over 10 years.

BOARD QUESTIONS:

Will there be an option for scuba lessons? As the programming enhances over time, there may be options for swim or scuba lessons during open water times. The initial focus is for the larger elements of the water park. It is a great idea that will be passed on. The developer will present the design at a future Board meeting.

The amenities seem to cater to older kids and young adults. Will there be activities for younger kids? The inflatable obstacle course will attract kids and families that may not be surfers. As with the Town's other public pools, there will be options for 4 to 5 years old and up. The beach area is another option for younger kids.

Will there be spectator areas around the skill-based amenities? Yes, there will be spectator areas in order to attract large events and tournaments. This parcel is adjacent to the Great Lawn and daytime tournaments can be combined with nighttime concerts to provide a whole park experience.

When will construction begin? The project is currently in a 3-week master planning session with the same team that did the Regional Park design in order to provide consistency. They are looking to begin construction as soon as possible.

Has this organization done this type of facility before? The Strand of Gilbert will be the first facility of its kind. The company is based out of California and they do have experience in water-type park facilities, although this is a new business venture for them.

How much water will the park use and what are the costs and impacts to the Town? There were about six months of negotiations to figure out the water component without impacting the Town's water supply. The project will supply its own water by purchasing water credits on the open market. They will be required to bank five years of water. The agreement specifies that The Strand is to pay for the use of the Town's potable water system to deliver water to the facility. They are also required to pay the associated system development fees of approximately \$1.9 million. The water usage is expected to be 150 acre-feet per year which is equivalent to a resort water feature. Typical water use for golf courses is in the 400s. Other water parks in the Valley use between 170–200 acre-feet per year.

Has there been discussion on ticket prices? They plan to offer a diverse pricing structure which may include a daily rate, memberships, or per amenity rates. That information is not available to the public at this time.

Will the facility operate year-round with programming for slower times or due to weather? Yes, the intent is to operate year-round.

If this is the first water park of this type, how can they estimate attendance? The Town reviewed their pro forma and had it independently verified through Applied Economics of Scottsdale. There were enough of certain water components to be able to compare with similar projects. Staff did not have those numbers available for this meeting, but will bring to a future meeting.

Were these types of water amenities identified through the prior community feedback for parks? Some community members had asked for diving facilities. Through the master planning process for the Regional Park, it was determined that there would be 48 acres available for public-private partnership opportunities. An aquatic element was requested in the Master Plan with more diving and swim lanes. The estimated construction cost for such an aquatic facility was estimated at \$20 million plus \$2 million a year in operations. The Town has not identified a funding source for that type of aquatic facility, although there are still areas within the Park available for future development opportunities. There was an RFP process for this 25-acre parcel and The Strand was one of the P3 projects presented.

Will The Strand be responsible for liability with activities such as surfing? Yes, the team worked with the Town's insurance provider to determine the amount of coverage needed for this facility. The lease requires that The Strand carry a \$20 million insurance policy. Additional coverage may be required for larger events. As a reference, the Town's \$30 million policy includes the fire departments and swat teams, etc.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

8. PARK UPDATES: Robert Carmona provided updated renderings for Gilbert Regional and Desert Sky Parks.

Gilbert Regional Park – Phase 1 is scheduled to open in September, 2019. The dirt has already been laid for the Mountain component. The top structure is 18 feet high and the Mountain overall is 35 feet high. The various climbing components and accessibility were reviewed. Several different types of slides are incorporated into the Mountain, including one of the longest slides in Arizona. Shade is provided through integrated shade structures, mature trees and the orientation of the playground.

The Splash Pad contains 55 different water components. The recirculated water system pumps 600 gallons per minute over the 4,000 square-foot wet area. The entire Splash Pad area covers 6,000 total square feet, with seating, turf, and shade elements along the perimeter.

The project group will be invited to a future Board meeting to provide progress updates and photos from the field. The plans for Phase 1B will also be presented to the Board for input at a future meeting. As soon as Phase 1 is open, construction will begin on Phase 1B including pickleball, tennis, and sand volleyball courts, the lake, amphitheater, and great lawn.

<u>Desert Sky Park</u> – Opening is expected in early October, 2019, to allow time for the grass to become established before teams are playing on it. The lake has been excavated and the four multi-use fields have been staked. LED lighting will be installed in the next few weeks using the Musco state-of-the-art product with little to no light pollution to the surrounding homes. There will be 400-500 parking spaces. The standard moving forward will be 100 parking spaces for each multi-use field. There will also be a playground and ramada. Similar to other basin parks, the restrooms will be located in the high and dry area by the lake and playground.

<u>Cactus Yards</u> – Next month, John Kennedy will provide a detailed report on Cactus Yards opening day and the first few months of operation. Robert Carmona reported that there were about 4,000 people on opening day and Les Presmyk and Barbara Guy were there handing out baseballs to the kids. To date, there have been three tournaments, with another scheduled for this weekend. There are only two weekends in July that are not booked. Attendance during the first month ranged from 8,000-12,000 per weekend and there were positive reviews from both attendees and tournament promotors.

BOARD QUESTIONS:

When will the fields at Desert Sky be reservable? In January those fields can be reserved. The sand-based fields require a little more maintenance, although they can better withstand the basin parcel as they have natural drainage built in. The only other sand-based fields in Town are at Cactus Yards.

How hot will the long tube slide get during the summer months? It will be no different than any other tube slide at other parks. The slide at the Mountain will have some overlook panels as well as ventilation within the slide.

When the existing LED field lights are shut off, they take 15 to 20 minutes to come back up. How long will these new LED lights take? Only a few minutes. The lights will be on the control link system with the ability to track and monitor. These lights will have very limited light pollution.

How far is it from the furthest point in the fields to the restrooms? It will be in the 800-foot range, similar to Discovery Park. As the Park is built out, more restrooms will be added on the high and dry area.

How far is Pecos Road from the Park? The Park entrance is approximately a quarter mile from Pecos Road.

Will there be major power running to the furthest points of the Park? Yes, the utility runs at this particular park have been one of the most complicated as it will go out to Power and Pecos Roads and there are also railroad lines. The utilities were right sized for the build out of the Park so it will only need to be done once. The lake can provide irrigation for all 16 fields.

Is this area expected to be used down the road as a viewing location for fireworks? As build out progresses, locations for fireworks will change as the fall zones need to be considered. The Public Safety Training Facility will be coming online in the area as well.

AGENDA ITEMS

9. COYOTES UPDATE: Rocky Brown reported that two construction firms provided quotes for the concrete pad that the deck will be placed on. The quotes were much higher than expected at \$81,000 and \$87,000. The Coyotes were surprised at those high quotes as well and will suggest additional firms the Town can reach out to. The Town will seek further quotes as well as explore other alternatives to bring the cost down.

Robert Carmona stated the Town will also look for sponsorship and partnership opportunities. Town staff has met with the neighborhood and other groups and feel this could be a great amenity for Cactus Yards.

10. ROLE OF THE PARKS BOARD: Robert Carmona provided information in response to questions from Board members. The Parks Board recommendations may encompass programming of public improvements, policy input and review, capital projects and programs, and regulations relating to park and recreation areas. The Vision of the Parks Board is to encourage the health and well-being of Gilbert residents through diverse recreational opportunities. The Town intends to offer safe, well-maintained facilities, parks and open spaces, including locally and regionally connected multi-use trails, equestrian paths and bicycle lanes. Robert wanted to make sure the time the Board is volunteering to the Town is worthwhile. If there are items that Board members would like brought up in future meetings, staff would be happy to arrange that.

Barbara Guy stated after the water facility was decided upon, she was contacted by many community members, although she was unaware of the project at that time. The Board worked very hard on the whole park project for a long time with a focus on the community input. She had concerns about this water park as do community members. She understood that some things need to be kept under wraps. She asked why this matter was handled in executive session.

Robert Carmona advised that the proposal did not go to executive session until the lease negotiations were completed, which is not uncommon. Staff is always open to ideas on how to make the process more open. There will be plenty of opportunities over the next few months for feedback from the Parks Board as they meet the partners and review the design and updates. It is not uncommon for RFP proposals to include non-disclosure agreements, which all Town staff has to sign. That means all of the details had to be held in confidence until it was presented to Council and approved. This process is not unlike other contract negotiations which have the same guidelines until an agreement is reached. Those are town-wide policies.

Vice Chair Ferron understood with the non-disclosure agreement that the Board could not find out about the project until it had passed the Council executive session. The non-disclosure is to protect the RFP respondent's privileged and private information unless and until the proposal is accepted by Council.

Vice Mayor Cook noted the BMX project years ago fell through after receiving negative public feedback. There was an RFP process for University partners downtown. Once a deal was signed, it was announced that Park University would be the first tenant. The same process occurred recently with the University of Arizona. All of those negotiations were private and could not be shared with the public. It was the same type of RFP process with the cemetery, which was not announced until all negotiations were complete. Those are all public-private partnerships. The Strand is dealing with technology out of Australia that is very unique and there are licensing and trademark considerations that need to be protected.

Robert Carmona advised this is just the first touch point for the land lease component of this project and it will go through the standard design review process and neighborhood meetings as with any development coming into Gilbert.

Vice Mayor Cook stated an aquatic center was identified as a priority in the needs assessment, although no funding source had been identified. Phase 1 is being funded from previous system development fees and Phase 2 is based on the sale of the two town-owned parcels. Phase 3 has no funding source at this point. An aquatic center could possibly go out to bond, as was done with the Freestone Recreation Center. An RFP went out for a Phase I project and three companies submitted different proposals. The majority of Council in executive session selected this project to move forward. After 18 months of discussion and negotiation, there is an option for a water component at no cost to the Town. It was a compromise in order to provide a water amenity, although it is not exactly what was identified in the needs assessment.

Rocky Brown noted that one benefit of the project being in executive session is that it prevented other cities or towns from taking the project. The Strand people would also be shopping Mesa, Chandler or Scottsdale.

Barbara Guy felt that the role of Board members was to serve as a liaison between the community and Council to provide feedback.

Vice Mayor Cook stated the Parks Board will be extremely active during all of the phases of the Park project. In a public-private partnership, there is a different type of economic development component and there are efforts to make full disclosure and to be as transparent as possible in order to get feedback.

Matthew Roberts felt that staff is often so close to a project that it can be difficult to have a fresh perspective. The Parks Board can provide feedback through fresh eyes as well as serve as a conduit to the community in terms of what the Town is considering doing, is doing, or has done.

Vice Chair Ferron has served on the Board about six years and felt there has been great transparency. The Board is the conduit and gives recommendations to Council, taking into consideration the feedback from the community. This Board has had some really good discussion and he felt staff has listened to the Board's recommendations on a regular basis. There are times when the Board can't be involved in certain discussions and he felt everyone understood that.

Robert Carmona stated if Board members would ever like to dive deeper into an item than can be done in a board meeting, he and staff would be happy to meet with them either one on one or in a small group. The feedback means a lot and allows staff to make adjustments as to how items are communicated. The main goal is to make sure that the time the Board is volunteering is worthwhile and valuable.

Vice Mayor Cook explained that one of the early options on that particular parcel was a large private membership-based gym with a pool. Council thought that project would come to fruition, although they did not want to lease the land.

Robert Carmona stated hearing all of the feedback is important for the Town as there are some recreational partnerships built-in as part of this lease with the potential to do lessons or lane swimming in some capacity.

Barbara Guy hoped that this facility would be affordable for our community as it seems like a very small niche that could be expensive.

Vice Chair Ferron asked what kind of separation there would be with this facility.

Robert Carmona stated the intent is not to have a lot of separation. We want to make sure to design the parking lot and the landscaping so that the whole property looks like it was planned together and has a synergy throughout. This project will have a fence as there is an open water component.

Barbara Guy felt if the project was looking at 2020, there was not a lot of time to get the community feedback.

Robert Carmona stated the group will be brought in to a Board meeting to be able to have those conversations and to ask questions. We want to allow them time to complete the master planning component and then they can provide a full view to the Board and to Council and the neighborhood. Right now, it is a conceptual plan.

11. PAGE PARK REPORT: Robert Carmona stated there was a communication from a citizen at the last Board meeting regarding the feeding of cats on Town property. This particular location is near Page Park. There is an Ordinance in place that prohibits feeding of wildlife on any Town-owned property including rights-of-way or parks. Ms. Liddell had brought the matter to the attention of the Police Department as well as the Parks Department. The Park Rangers and Town staff reviewed Ms. Liddell's concerns and her requests. The feedings were occurring between 4:00 and 5:15 a.m. and staff is working with the Park Rangers to adjust some of their hours. That change is not operational yet as there are only four Rangers on staff and the Town is in the process of recruiting two more. The current four Rangers need to take care of all of the parks between 5 a.m. and 10:30 p.m. Ms. Liddell had requested that signage and animal guards be installed and that the oleanders be removed or trimmed. The Town will be replacing the parking lot light shortly and are working on adjusting the hours for the Rangers. Robert Carmona has met with the groups that feed the cats on that property. Those groups have not been given permission to do so based on the Ordinance. The Town is aware of the feeding situation and will continue to monitor that area, and will look at signage and oleander trimming in the future. The Parks Department and the Park Rangers will follow the guidelines of that Ordinance.

Vice Mayor Cook stated the Ordinance does not prohibit anyone from taking a feral cat home and feeding it on their own private property. The organization feels very strongly that the feral cats are territorial and live in colonies. The intent of their program is to capture, spay or neuter, and release the animals. They believe feeding those animals will keep them in the area and that they will not wander into other areas. The Ordinance does not prevent these groups from conducting their activities on private property. Vice Mayor Cook stated people cannot change their car oil on Town property or set up a business without licensing. Feeding the cats falls into a category of many things that are not allowed on Town property. Members of those groups come to Council meetings often to speak about this matter. Councilmembers have offered to meet with group members in the office, as is customary, although they have refused and stated they prefer to have a public meeting first. The groups are aware of the Ordinance and are not happy about it.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Doralise Liddell lives in the Lacy Tract in the Heritage District and spoke at the last Board meeting. On February 21, 2019 at 6:00, Ms. Liddell witnessed a person feeding feral cats in the parking lot and called the police non-emergency number. An officer drove through the parking lot and parked at the Senior Center. Ms. Liddell approached the officer and asked that he please enforce the Ordinance. The officer drove toward the individual feeding the cats and both vehicles left. Ms. Liddell felt the officer did not investigate the situation and she has pictures of the individual feeding the cats. If the Ordinance is not enforced, that behavior is being condoned. Page Park is a neighborhood park. It is a low-income, poverty-stricken area and the seniors and residents use the park. The public needs to be educated on the Ordinance, as many do not know it exists. The group feeding the cats wants to trap and return the animals, although there is no evidence that the program works. She felt people will continue to drop off more cats in the area knowing they will be fed. This group can bring the cats into their own neighborhood. Ms. Liddell stated the Town is spending millions of dollars for shiny new parks, and she was sure the Town did not want cat colonies there. The Riparian Preserve had a similar issue with cats in the past and it was fixed. This issue is destroying the neighborhood and Ms. Liddell wants her property rights and her livability restored. Feral animals should not have more rights than she does as a property owner. She has been talking about this issue for almost two years now. She suggested that those feeding the cats purchase some property where they can have all the cats they want. She stated to trap and then return feral animal to her neighborhood is against the law. She asked that the Parks Department enforce the Ordinance and place signage in the parks. The approach to this situation has to include education, enforcement, and humane removal of the feral animals. The officer's report stated the woman was petting the cats. That leads Ms. Liddell to believe the cats are not feral and can be adopted.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

12. MINUTES - Consider Approval of the Minutes of the Parks Board meeting of January 15, 2019:

MOTION: Matthew Roberts moved to approve the minutes of the Parks Board meeting of January 15, 2019; seconded by Gil Honeycutt. The Motion passed 6-0.

COMMUNICATIONS

- 13. REPORT FROM CHAIR: Vice Chair Ferron had no report
- 14. REPORT FROM BOARD MEMBERS / FOUNDATION LIAISON: None.
- **15. REPORT FROM COUNCIL LIAISON:** Vice Mayor Cook thanked the staff for all of their time spent working with the Parks and Recreation Board. There is so much activity happening with Robert's team and all of the input is well-received.

Vice Mayor Cook advised that Council is in the process of moving forward with an ordinance related to e-scooters or micro-mobility devices. He would prefer that they be banned temporarily. The ordinance would allow for a pilot project of up to a year in order to understand the mobility devices and how they impact the Town. The ordinance would go into effect the first week of April, 2019. The companies providing the devices have until that time to agree to the rules set forth in the ordinance and the contract, or they will need to pull out of Gilbert. Vice Mayor Cook stated he is a big fan of those devices and he owns a hoverboard, although he has a hard time seeing how these devices and the crowded pedestrian sidewalks could go together. He had suggested to one of the device companies that if they truly wanted to partner with Gilbert, they should invest some infrastructure dollars to help create a dedicated path for the mobility devices. The pilot is for the whole Town of Gilbert and rules are set forth that will need to be followed.

Matthew Roberts asked what happens now when one of those devices is found. Is the Town responsible to pick it up?

Vice Mayor Cook stated at this time there are no rules in place. These companies do not have a business license and the Town cannot even tax them. The Town has been hands off.

Staff has reported that there have only been two accidents, although Vice Mayor Cook stated that there have been multiple calls to the fire department ranging from minor to severe. It is a public safety issue. There was an incident recently with an adult woman who had been drinking and riding one of these devices and she ended up crashing on the sidewalk. He has seen parents riding with a child on a scooter and most riders do not wear a helmet.

Gil Honeycutt had a concern with people riding the scooters on the walkways in the Heritage District and running into people coming out of a shop. He has had two scooters left in his front yard.

Vice Mayor Cook advised that the new rules prohibit riding the devices north or south on Gilbert Road in the downtown area. The intent is to allow the devices to be initially parked near bus stops or in designated areas. The problem is that the riders can leave them anywhere. Bird does not pick them up and move them to a designated spot until 10 p.m.

16. REPORT FROM STAFF LIAISONS: Robert Carmona introduced new staff member Marshall MacFarlane who will serve as the Parks and Facilities Manager. He has a strong background in maintenance and infrastructure planning as well as safety and emergency preparedness.

Mr. MacFarlane stated he was born and raised in eastern Canada and spent the first half of his life in New Brunswick. He has been in Arizona for 22 years, after spending six years in northern Maine. He has an extensive background in facilities with a strong emphasis on emergency planning and security operations. He is a millwright and industrial mechanic by trade and spent 13 years in Canada's version of the National Guard. For the last 10 years, he has been at the University of Arizona, Phoenix Biomed Campus serving as executive director of campus management and operations overseeing a million square feet of facilities. He is a freelance outdoor writer in his spare time.

Robert advised that the Parks Board will become heavily involved in reviewing the Long-Range Infrastructure Planning policy and will be hearing from Marshall in the future.

Marshall was welcomed to the Gilbert team.

17. UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Thursday, March 14, 6:30 pm, the first Downtown Concert of the series will be held at Water Tower Plaza. Elvis Before Noon will be performing.
- Friday, March 15, 7 pm, the Gilbert Symphony Orchestra will hold a free concert at the Higley Center for Performing Arts. Tickets can be downloaded through Higleycenter.org.

- Saturday, March 23, 8 am, Kapow Superhero Run at Freestone Park. Over 1,200 runners have already signed up. People are advised to register now before it sells out.
- Thursday, March 28, 6:30 pm, Downtown Concert with Blaine Long & Rosas Del Rey.
- Saturday, April 6, 9 am, Gilbert Global Village Festival, Civic Center Plaza.

CONCLUSION

18. MOTION TO ADJOURN: Gil Honeycutt moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Barbara Guy. The Motion passed 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 P.M.

	ATTEST:	
Robert Ferron, Vice Chair		, Staff Liaison

(TE: 14082507)